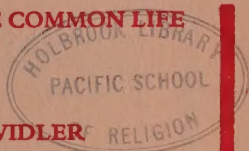


# THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY  
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER



## African Number

JULY 1950

Vol. I No. 7

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THE CHALLENGE  
OF AFRICA

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RACE RELATIONS AND  
CHRISTIAN DUTY

•  
MIGRANT LABOUR  
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# *The Frontier*

published monthly in continuation of  
the work of

*The Christian News-Letter*

*Annual Subscription £1 : Single Copies 2/-*

All Correspondence about Subscriptions to the Publisher  
BASIL BLACKWELL, 49 Broad Street, Oxford

All Letters to THE EDITORS to be addressed to  
*The Frontier*, 21 Essex Street, Strand, W.C. 2

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*Printed for Basil Blackwell, 49 Broad Street, by The Church Army Press,  
Cowley, Oxford.*

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# THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE  
COMMON LIFE

Vol. I. No. 7.

JULY 1950

## Notes of the Month

OUR present number is devoted to the discussion of certain African questions, by writers who have intimate and expert knowledge of the conditions in which they arise. This month's Notes will therefore be shorter than usual; they are of the nature of a chairman's remarks introducing the contributions of the distinguished observers whose generous collaboration we have been fortunate enough to secure.

### *African Mortality*

In Africa the death rate among native children is incomparably worse than among those of European parentage. In the Union of South Africa it is more than three times as high in the best areas, rising to fourteen times in the worst. General Native mortality within the Union may not be higher than the average throughout tropical Africa to-day, and is probably lower than it was throughout tropical Africa before the white man came; but the continued morbidity and mortality of Africans is a clear indication of the heavy responsibility that lies upon the European governments of the continent. The betterment of Africa by the importation of our way of life has not so far bettered the Africans' situation by the material test we should consider decisive. The opening-up of Africa has saved untold millions of Native lives from death by wild beasts, by the ravages of tribal

fighting, and by some indigenous diseases ; yet it has multiplied deaths from the squalid conditions, social evils and consequent diseases that are rampant in the mining and industrial centres around which the Africans throng before there is adequate accommodation for them. Even if, on balance, European management of their country increases their numbers—in itself a questionable gain—it has done too little to raise the quality of their living, and that in too few places, to confirm us in the high confidence we formerly felt in our civilizing mission. Never before has there been such a spirit of self-criticism among the pioneers, administrators and missionaries of Africa. It is a time of caution, of reconsideration, of research into new methods of promoting the tribal African to the status of civilized man.

### *Africa Labours*

White invasion of Africa did not simply drive the primitive tribal peoples into the interior or exterminate them, as it did in the Americas, Australia and Tasmania. This is mainly because most of Africa's colonization took place within the last hundred years, when the pioneering activities of Western civilization had become less piratical and more commercial in character, but also because the African's response to better treatment was docile and serviceable. The Dark Continent had been the world's great reserve of labouring man-power from time immemorial until its recent incorporation in the known world ; slaves had been the chief or only commodity for which merchant ships visited its harbourless coasts. Practically all the muscular labour used by the Europeans for their transformation of the African scene has been provided by the Natives, apart from the importation of Indian labour, which has had such important consequences ; and now, when muscle-power is being superseded, Africans are still among the cheapest employees in the world. But with their arrival at the status of factory operatives and machine-minders their situation is potentially very different. They have become a black proletariat



facing a white bourgeoisie, and the familiar Marxian anti-thesis is sharpened by the excessively wide difference in standards of living and is intensified on both sides by the profound prejudice of race and colour. The one circumstance which is at present keeping this explosive mixture below flash-point is the backward and impoverished condition that makes the Natives incapable of effective revolt.

### *The Great Dilemma*

The present low level of mass education, no less than malnutrition and debilitation, prevents united social action. The minority that is sufficiently educated to understand any principle of organized pressure is numerically insignificant. Sporadic revolts are frequent but fissiparous: they split readily into dissident factions, along lines of feeling inherited from the tribal societies from which the wage-earners have been more or less completely uprooted. Even so, the ascendancy of the white employers would become untenable if the number of native Africans were not kept down by abnormal rates of disease and death. For half a century past the proportion between European and Native people in South Africa has altered but very slightly. As a recent writer has said:—

Efforts which had the effect of reducing the morbidity and mortality rates of the Natives would unleash their reproductive capacity, and increase the difficulty of maintaining "white civilization" in South Africa . . . . A social and economic revolution with radical changes in the relations of black and white must precede the Native demographic revolution.<sup>1</sup>

South Africa presents a special and acute case, but this judgement would apply broadly to all areas in which industrial development is proceeding. Yet efforts to improve the health and education of the Natives are being

<sup>1</sup> *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. I, No. 2, June 1950. Article on "Some Demographic Aspects of White Supremacy in South Africa", by Leo Kuper.

undertaken despite this fear of the consequence, and their gradual success is presumable. Is European man, then, sawing off the branch upon which he is perched in Africa? As to that, if his practical reason and self-justification for being in Africa is to introduce his technological culture (and he can live there by no other), the European is bound to "proletarianize" the Africans; and he is equally bound to diffuse Christian conceptions of legal and human right, because they are inherent in the only kind of social order he himself understands. In his own spiritual interest, the European must work in the subjects' interest, though it imperil his authority or even his existence in Africa. This is the dilemma which made a recent observer, meditating upon a part of Kenya that the British have turned into "a tolerable imitation of Leicestershire" ask whether the White settlers would still be there in fifty years' time. It is the problem which has occupied the back of the minds of our best administrators and mission workers for a good many years, has modified their views of the African problem and is now reshaping their policies.

### *Towards a New Community*

How are the colonial Governments to meet this situation? In the earlier years of this century, the keeping of the peace and the protection of trade were still regarded as a sufficient basis for policy, but were producing conditions for which the local governments were forced to seek remedial measures often inspired or aided by religious or humanitarian students of the African situation. Since then colonial policy has widened into a much more positive conception of the function of government as educational, a preparation and training of the Native community to take every kind of responsibility for local self-government. The first great advance in this direction, known as "indirect rule", associated the local tribal leaders closely and officially with the administrative system; but it is a policy which in existing circumstances yields declining advantages, and it is being

supplemented by efforts at "mass education". The more progressive administrators now wish to see this expanded, as "community development", into a comprehensive movement that would call forth all the potential initiative and enterprise of Africans, for the salvaging and creative development of their communities.

### *Nationalism*

Any real social betterment means that Africans must themselves provide both voluntary work and money. It presupposes a capability to take social initiative which need not be doubted, since voluntary associations spring up in abundance and great variety in Africa for purposes that the people understand, in contrast to the lethargy and prejudice with which they often respond to organization "from above". These existing efforts are not, however, such as would add up to a unified movement enabling Africans to cope with their own situation as a whole. Some of them are more likely, in proletarian areas, to foster the resentments and suspicions which make effective guidance by the government more difficult. But there are two ways by which it is sought to link these African social initiatives with a wider movement for communal betterment. The first and more difficult would demand, in effect, a refinement of administrative policy almost involving a new training of the personnel; administrators would have to co-operate so fully and sensitively with every voluntary initiative as to neutralize native suspicion and generate a new atmosphere for co-operation. The other, more cautiously though firmly advocated, is fully to acknowledge and encourage the aspiration towards nationalism which has already appeared, and help to guide it to constructive work. Nationalism is believed to be the only general incentive capable of producing the required effect: and we seem to be coming to the conclusion that the only way of discharging our responsibility to the African is to reassure him that our leadership is genuinely of the kind that aims at making itself unnecessary

—as it did in India. There are obvious risks in this. Experience elsewhere does not suggest that a government which is explicitly “on the way out” is in the best position to exert creative influence. But some experts on Africa feel that the incentive of nationalism is of a value that outweighs the risks.

### *The Protection of Minorities*

A British government in Africa has however a special responsibility for its own nationals settled in its territory. If conditions became such that it were no longer in the interest of white settlers to remain, the result would be fatal to African progress as we conceive it. The right aim for the future is that European responsibility should be prolonged at least until the African community has progressed so far in democracy that it can happily include the British and other minorities whose contributions it will still need. If this is to be so, the present difficulties of the Europeans may need more consideration than is apparently realized by many in this country. We in England, who see only the educated Africans now growing so numerous at our universities, hardly realize how tiny a minority they are in Africa or what serious embarrassments we should experience if we had to live surrounded by the vast majority of Natives in their present deplorable condition of ignorance and squalor—embarrassments which do not tend to decrease with the progress of Africa’s “industrial revolution”. It is not only in South Africa that the minds of white settlers are turning towards ideas of a more or less complete residential segregation of races. The policy of *apartheid* proposed by the Malan Government, which has been so much criticized in the press, raises acute moral as well as practical problems we cannot here discuss, though we hope to be able to do so in a later issue. But very little has been said of similar ideas that are unofficially mooted in other places, notably in the Rhodesias where half of all the British settlers in East Africa reside.



The notion of a development by "cantons"—administrative units, in some of which the Natives, and in others the Europeans, would control the local government—cannot be estimated without precise knowledge of its practical merits. But neither can it be dismissed in advance on moral grounds. It is at least conceivable that a partial segregation, in a certain phase of development, might be more favourable to progress and racial co-operation than a more confused and general attempt to adjust racial interests under one common law.

### *The Real Issue*

One thing can be said, however—that it is harmful to melodramatize the apprehensions of the Whites as if the issue were the survival of "white civilization". That civilization has plenty of living-space elsewhere. "Black civilization" is the real issue. The continuance and prosperity of the Europeans in Africa is vital to the Africans themselves. For one thing, the Natives cannot enter into a new heritage without recovering and increasing the fertility of their soil, which their primitive methods of cropping and stocking are rapidly depleting; and of this there is no hope except by methods that only resident Europeans are at all likely to teach them. Without this, no contrivance of special incentives will direct African energy to communal achievement, for a sufficiency of energy will not be there. As Dr. Oldham once said, African progress is impossible upon a basis of degenerating physique. Nor is progress for the Africans conceivable without a spiritual change which can be looked for only, under Providence, if their Western friends remain for a long future. We are not here thinking only of the conversion of Africa to Christianity. Africa is a land of religion, and the central importance of the African Churches to the reclamation of Native society is well known; their hold upon the affections of the people is established and extending. But even the conversion of Africa needs, for its full effect in life, to be accompanied and surrounded by

something else—by the mental disciplines which have been created in the course of Christian history ; by the initiation of the African into the rational, self-critical consciousness of modern man. For we have seen how easily the African's new-found faith, at least in the independent sects, can revert towards ancestral beliefs in witchcraft. The demonologies which still rule Native life in the undeveloped wildernesses of this vast tropical continent are far from eradicated ; they can still haunt the background of the converts' minds. The fear and faith of witchcraft was the bane of Europe also in the twilight of the mediaeval world, a ghostly terror that the Churches failed to exorcise until, by God's mercy, rational consciousness was fortified by the arrival of the new critical and scientific learning. Africa needs what it can use of the inventions and technique of white civilization for many practical reasons, but especially for the education that goes with them, which can help to chase the devils out of the primitive imagination. Africa needs the white civilization because, above all, it needs the light of Christ.

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## INTERIM

### Artists in Christian Conference

The conference on Art, organized by the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, from May 15th to the 20th, was something of an experiment. Its purpose was to explore the place of the arts—including literature and music as well as the visual arts—as a creative human activity, and their relation to religion and to social life. Those present included painters, sculptors, novelists, poets and musicians, representing Switzerland, France, Holland, Sweden, Finland, Great Britain, the U.S.A., and both Eastern and Western Zones of Germany. Under the chairmanship of Professor G. van der Leeuw, of Holland, the Conference moved from Dr. R. A. Scröder's consideration, largely from the standpoint of a classical Christian liberalism, of the tension between art as commitment to social and ethical values and art as self-expression, through Dr. Olov Hartman's valuable exploration of its relations to liturgy, and to *diakonia*, or service of humanity in the name of the Church, to a stimulating paper by M. Denis de Rougemont,

who suggested the formulation of a theological criticism of art, to be founded on a meditation on the Trinity.

\* \* \* \* \*

The discussions which followed upon the delivery of these papers showed plenty of intellectual life. It was inevitable, perhaps, that the prevailing theological climate of the gathering should be a radical evangelicalism of a Parthian type. This carried with it a certain tendency to limit, or even to repudiate, the sphere of activity proper to Art, in the name of the Divine Transcendence. For, as one of the speakers said, quoting an acquaintance who was a disciple of Barth, "in the sight of God a painting by Michelangelo and a tractor are absolutely equal—and both may equally become temptations." Some of those present, at any rate, sighed occasionally, with a secret nostalgia, for a little honest Pelagianism—if only to redress the balance. But the thesis of Dr. Hartman, referred to above, speaking as a pastor of the Swedish Church, in which both strong evangelical and liturgical traditions are combined, offered, perhaps, a way out of the impasse.

It was impressive to note the manner in which, again and again, the text of Scripture was found to be relevant to the themes of the conference. But here again one was inevitably faced with antinomies. On the one hand, there was the voice of Isaiah—"there was no beauty that we should desire him". But on the other, there were those texts which speak of the New Jerusalem, "a city of perfect beauty", and of the risen, ascended, and glorified Christ. It was a singularly happy chance—so to call it—that the Feast of the Ascension fell on the midmost day of the conference.

But off-setting any tendency to contemplative escapism, there was the problem of the relation of the artist to Society, raised with a passionate urgency by several of the speakers. For, as they pointed out, the practical and economic position of the artist is becoming well-nigh intolerable in the modern world. Here was a subject which itself might form the sole subject of a second conference.

### **Thedden Grange**

For over thirty years the Industrial Christian Fellowship has employed full-time Lay Missioners as an integral part of its evangelistic work. In the past these Missioners have been trained "on the field" under the guidance of an older colleague. Such a system, though on the whole it worked well, had inevitable disadvantages. When, therefore, the Fellowship received Thedden Grange, at Alton in Hampshire,

as a gift from Mr. B. W. Veysey, it was decided to open it as a Training Centre where young men could be more adequately prepared for this work.

The College has accommodation for about twenty. At the moment there are six students in residence, mostly following a two year course. When trained they will have a knowledge of Christian doctrine and its application to the problems of modern industrialized society. They will also be helped to explain the Christian ethic in a way likely to be understood and assimilated by the average man or woman. This will be their job. Wherever they are stationed they will mix with their fellow men and women, in factories, dockyards, market places and farms. Now that there is so serious a shortage of clergy, the trained layman is of incalculable value. The I.C.F. propose, therefore, to use the College not merely for training their own Missioners, but also for short term courses for men who wish to remain in their own occupations. The devotional life, together with the study and fellowship, should also be of great value and interest to men anxious to serve as Hon. Lay Readers in their free time.

\* \* \* \* \*

### A New Ecumenical Secretary

Readers of *The Frontier* will be interested to know that the World Council of Churches has recently set up a "Liaison Secretariat for Lay Activities". Its function will be to keep in touch with the lay groups and institutions that have been developing in different countries whose aim is to discover the meaning of the Christian's responsibility in his professional work, whether as craftsman or employer, as doctor or teacher, as peasant or statesman, etc. Some of these groups have been sponsored by the Churches, others are spontaneous associations of Christians who are engaged in various trades and professions. None are satisfied that they know the answers or have discovered the way out. All are aware that they may have much to learn from the experience and reflection of similar groups in other countries. The Liaison Secretary for Lay Activities will endeavour to serve as an organ of communication between all these frontier movements, and his work will be closely connected with that of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. Dr. H. H. Walz, who has been appointed to take charge of this secretariat, will be visiting Britain in September. He will attend a conference of the Christian Frontier Council, and make contact with other lay groups under the auspices of the British Council of Churches.



## MIGRANT LABOUR IN AFRICA TO-DAY

BEFORE the European development of Africa began, African migrations were on a different scale from to-day, and took place for reasons concerned with food shortage, inter-tribal wars and raids, seasonal movements of cattle to new grazing lands. To-day it is true to say that over most of Africa south of the Sahara, migrant labour is inherent in the economic development carried out by the European governments and private enterprise. Wherever such developments depend on African labour in towns, in construction works, in mining centres, on plantations and farms, a large part of that labour moves from rural areas to the towns or mines, and often also from town to town. As Lord Hailey stated in *An African Survey*: "The migration of large numbers of the male population from their homes to distant places of work is one of the characteristic features of the labour question in Africa." This quotation introduces the most sinister aspect of migrant labour, namely that it is largely a movement of men from the rural areas, thus causing an unbalanced sex ratio in the rural areas which the men have left, as well as in the towns and mines where they congregate.

This aspect of migrant labour, namely the separation of men from their families and homes for periods ranging from a few months to several years, is easily recognizable as a profound social upheaval. The Commission on Migrant Labour in Nyasaland, which reported in 1935 and which gave rise to several questions in Parliament, emphasized this social disintegration almost to the exclusion of other aspects of the problem. It is important to see the problem in due perspective before analysing its various aspects, and before assessing the results in terms of social advance or social deterioration. I followed up the 1935 Commission Report with an investigation of over 100 villages in Nyasaland in 1939, and both then and in 1947 I have seen something of African life in towns and mining centres.

Before attempting this analysis it is probably advisable to pose the problem as it is generally stated: Is it desirable that Africans should continue to move from rural areas to the towns in order to engage in wage-earning employment? Or should there be an attempt to build up a permanent urbanized population in towns and mining centres, divorced from the land and economically dependent on wage-earning? Although this is an over-simplification of the situation it is undoubtedly one of the main issues, whichever way the question is answered, and it has in either case wide reaching consequences. In attempting to open up a problem of this magnitude in a short article, it is necessary to treat it from a particular angle, and I intend to make the main focus the effects on African family life of this exodus of men for work in industrial centres.

It has been asserted many times that the men are forced to leave their villages in order to earn money to pay their taxes. This need to pay taxes is however only one facet of the changing economy due to the impact of European governments and of commercial development on the African continent. On the one hand there is a demand for labour in the towns and industrial centres, and this demand finds its response in the flow of men from the rural areas. In the early days of European development this response had to be stimulated by large scale recruiting, and organized in varying systems of contract labour. To-day in many rural areas of Africa there is no need for recruiting drives to entice men to the industrial centres. The flow of men in these rural areas to the towns is such that labour needs are met by voluntary migration. Where specific recruitment and contract systems are found, it is mainly, though not always, an attempt to control and regulate this flow of workers, and to insure that repatriation takes place at regular intervals and that the conditions of travel are super-vized and amenities provided.

Migrant labour, in the stricter use of the word, is in fact part of the "drift to the towns" which is a common

phenomenon in almost all parts of the world. In the parts of Africa where this drift to the towns is on any large scale it is due, at least in part, to the transition in the rural areas from a subsistence economy to one in which money plays an increasing part. It is sometimes forgotten that the trader preceded the labour recruiter in Africa, as the missionary educationist preceded the administrator. The desire to buy trade goods, and the ability to earn money wages through a rudimentary education and training, were the precursors of those changes in the economy of the African villages which are visible everywhere to-day. It does not follow that this changing economy is necessarily in the direction of a rising standard of living, and there is evidence to show that the opposite is the case in some areas. The former subsistence economy and its related internal trading has been jolted out of gear, and in its place has come a succession of new wants, and of new opportunities to earn money to satisfy those wants. For the most part these opportunities involve leaving the home area and migrating to industrial centres. In this perspective therefore we can see migrant labour as part of much wider changes in African life, and the old fallacy that men had to leave their villages to earn tax money is to a large extent exploded. In the majority of British areas, at least, the tax money can be earned by the sale of goods raised in the villages, whether cash crops or village crafts. In many of the Nyasaland villages which I investigated, the men made articles for local consumption such as baskets, mats, hoes, etc., during the slack agricultural season, and sold them locally, and paid their taxes out of the proceeds. In other villages, a month's work on the roads, or in other forms of public works, provided the tax money. It was, therefore, not necessary to leave the villages for long periods and to travel long distances in order to earn money for taxes. We must look elsewhere for the motives which induce men to embark on voluntary or controlled labour migration.

These motives are complex and vary from one part of Africa to another. Common to all probably is the desire for the amenities which town life has to offer as compared with the stagnation and backwardness in the villages, and the lure of the cash wages offered in industry with their apparent command of a higher standard of living. It is important to stress that it is an illusion that money wages in a town will always enable a man to own personal and household goods which he could not possess in the village. The widespread disillusionment experienced by African workers when they discover the cost of living in town, compared with their earning capacity in money wages, is one aspect of the labour troubles and strikes of to-day and of the general disturbed atmosphere of town life in Africa.

In varying degrees, according to the territory, and to the area within the territory and the stage of development reached, other motives can be seen as operative in causing men to leave the villages for work elsewhere. Before 1939, when the bulk buying of cash crops raised by African peasant farmers was not practised, their cocoa or cotton or tobacco or maize or rice was subject to the existing fluctuations of world prices. This uncertainty about the rewards of their labour and their consequent money earnings was one of the causes in Nyasaland for increased labour migration to the Rand mines where the wages, compared with cash crop sales, sounded fabulously large. Another motive, less easily calculable but none the less powerful, is the adventurous spirit of young men. This may take the form of wanting to see new places and new ways of living. It may be an escape from the surveillance of their elders and the required conformity to local standards of behaviour. It may be the added prestige which comes from travel. It is important to distinguish this motive which arises from the local conditions and cultural pattern of the people, from that induced by modern education in the primary school. There is a widespread tendency in Africa for the boys who have passed through the whole or a part of a primary schooling to turn



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their backs on agricultural work. Wherever this tendency is found, it is an added incentive to migrate to the towns and industrial centres in search of wage-earning employment. My Nyasaland investigations showed a close correlation between standards reached in primary schooling and a high incidence in migration.

This brief survey of some of the factors in any study of migrant labour will have to serve as an introduction to the more intensive analysis of the effects on family life. Here it is necessary to bring together the two sets of conditions referred to earlier: the attempts at stabilization of industrial labour on the one hand, planning for the permanent urbanization of families; and on the other hand, the continuance of the system whereby migrant male workers leave their families in the villages, and the sex ratio is left unbalanced both in towns and in rural areas.

In thinking of family life as it is affected by this large scale migration, we need to look at the basis of family life in a rather wider setting than is sometimes given to it. We shall think of the economic basis of family life, and the differentiation of functions between men and women in the production of food stuffs and other necessities, and their distribution within the family circle, or the village or wider area represented by markets. Associated with these economic activities are the relations of husband and wife within the family circle, towards each other, their children and their relatives. The stability of marriage, the exercise and maintenance of authority, the respect for moral codes and the sanctions attached to them, are all obviously affected by this exodus of men. Behind all these aspects of the problem lie the spiritual beliefs and practices, whether pagan, Moslem, or Christian, which bind individuals together at the deeper levels of living, which enjoin and sanction certain behaviour patterns, and which either increase the tension caused by separation or enable individuals to meet it with courage and determination.

Throughout Africa, as in all countries where agriculture is the main source of livelihood, the work of preparing the land, cultivating and harvesting crops is divided among men and women in varying proportions. In Nyasaland, as in other Central African areas, the main work of raising the food crops falls on the women, while the men do the clearing of new land and raising the cash crops such as tobacco and cotton. I found that in the patrilineal areas where the wife was living among her husband's relatives, she tended to cultivate the same amount of land and to raise approximately the same crops when her husband was away as when he was present. This was partly due to a desire to please her husband's people and to maintain her reputation as a good housewife. In these areas also her reputation as a faithful wife was on the whole carefully guarded, both by the woman herself and by her relatives. In some of the matrilineal areas where the wife was with her mother and sisters and other female relatives, there was not the same incentive to maintain her own food supplies since she could always depend on her relatives to help her out. They in turn regarded the husband who had gone away as one who owed them labour as a son-in-law, and they were not disposed to make things easy for him on his return. Among these people the woman's children belonged to her mother's family and not to her husband's, and hence a tendency to have casual relations with other men was not regarded in the same light.

It would be unwise to generalize from the results of this Nyasaland investigation, but the instances quoted show the influence of the social pattern and of tribal structure in villages where migrant labour is a common feature. In order to understand what effect the exodus of men has upon family life in a given area, it is essential to know first the social structure of family life in its traditional form, and to study also the various influences from outside which are changing and modifying traditional ideas and practices in family living. Among these, two perhaps stand out. The



first is the new ideas which the men bring back from the towns and mining centres where they work. While there they often form temporary unions with women in the town and they set up house together. In these conditions the woman often tries to keep her hold on the man through a clean house, good cooking, and care of her and his clothes. I have often heard men in Nyasaland who have returned from work away compare their temporary town home with the village home to which they came back, and accuse their wives of careless housewifery, forgetting the additional work village women have in fetching water and wood from a distance, and the limited foodstuffs from which meals must be cooked. Town and mining centre houses are far from always being a step above the village home. But my own observations lead me to think that when African women have certain amenities such as a water supply, and are anxious to make a comfortable home for a man, their pride in good housekeeping comes out, and they make a great effort to maintain their standards. I have known men who have returned from the mines and who mean to settle in the villages build a good house for their wives and try to teach them how to keep it in good order.

The other influence from outside which is changing traditional life is the Christian Church. The introduction of monogamous marriage in African society raises many problems, some of which are directly related to the effects of migrant labour, in so far as monogamy tends to break up the former cohesion of the African patterns of family life. The important point here is how far Christian teaching, as well as church discipline, helps both men and women to solve the problems of separation while the men are away at work. It seemed to me that frequently the main emphasis in teaching about the home and family life was limited to the sexual behaviour of husband and wife, and gave far too little attention to building up the "externals" of home life and to providing some guiding principles for social behaviour under changing conditions.

The women left behind in the villages have to adjust themselves to a number of changes when the husband leaves for a period of work. She has first to see to her food supply and that of her children and other dependants. This is her primary concern and in it she may or may not get help from her neighbours and relatives. Unless her husband sends her regular remittances she has to find some means of getting money to buy necessities such as clothes, household utensils, and work implements. She has to bring up her children and to decide what measure of discipline, if any, she will and can exercise. If she is a careful housewife, there are the standards of her housekeeping to maintain without the stimulus of cooking and caring for her husband. Finally, there is her own personal life, her love of her husband, solicitations from other men, her personal loneliness in the face of sexual, economic, and general social needs.

These problems are a great challenge to the local churches, both to the ministers, to the synods, to the women missionaries, and to the congregations. They are a challenge to planning and "preventive" action of a high order so that the women may be strengthened and taught and encouraged in advance, and not just dragged before the church elders or the chiefs' court for adultery. The observer sees all too little of this kind of preventive action, as compared with the censorious comments on the increase in adultery and divorce.

There is no doubt that the system of migrant labour, by the nature of the conditions it creates in the villages, is one of the main causes of increasing instability in marriage and of broken homes. These broken homes result, as they do everywhere, in the growth of lawlessness and disrespect for authority among the children, since nothing can replace the initial training of a child in the home in general moral principles and conduct.

Let us look for a moment at the alternative to migrant labour, the stabilization of African families as permanent industrial workers and urban dwellers. The best known

example of such a policy is in the Katanga, in the Belgian Congo, where for about twenty years a permanent labour force has been aimed at and provided for. One consequence of such a policy is the almost complete detribalization of numbers of men, women, and children now permanently settled in the towns and mining centres. Another result is that social services such as housing, health, education, and social welfare must be provided on an adequate scale if slums and crime are to be avoided, or at least minimized. The Belgian authorities have foreseen this need, and the mines, municipalities, and missions have combined to make the policy a success. British observers are usually impressed with the efficiency and success of this large-scale urbanization. I have also found some Belgians almost aghast at the magnitude of the task they have taken on, and have found them wondering whether this virtually complete cutting off of all tribal roots can in the long run bring happiness to the African workers and their families.

In the majority of British territories in Africa no such large scale urbanization of African labour forces has been tried. On a smaller scale, there are in many industrial and urban centres African families who are to all intents and purposes permanent town dwellers, the men dependent on wage earning, the women housekeeping on a money income in good or bad houses, and the children growing up in city streets.

It is clear that under both sets of conditions, migrant labour or permanent urbanization, there are formidable difficulties to be overcome. It would be fatal to take a doctrinaire view and say on general grounds that one or the other is best for Africans. There are enough facts known about both sets of conditions for preventive and remedial action to be taken, especially by voluntary bodies like the Christian Church. It should be clear that traditional African family life, dependent on the old tribal structure, is likely to collapse under the strain either of the exodus of men to work centres or of city life. If that is accepted, then there

is a clear challenge to the churches to consider what they have done and what they must do in these two, very different, situations. This is not a matter which the Christian laity should leave to official church bodies and appointed ministers. It is a social problem larger even and more dangerous to social equilibrium than the Industrial Revolution in Britain.

MARGARET READ.

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## RACE RELATIONS AND CHRISTIAN DUTY

RACE is only one of the many things that divide men from each other. But race and colour (for the second though not always the same, generally adds to the first its own dividing quality) have been increasingly felt as barriers during the last two or three centuries of human history. In our own day race relations have taken on a new and, to the western world, disturbing character. This is because the so-called coloured races, which for almost the whole of their recorded contact with the West have been so weak, poor, and unorganized that they represented merely a temptation to oppression and a call upon restraint and compassion, have begun to assert their independence and to challenge a balance of power which was weighted so heavily against them. A large and difficult adjustment of ideas and of interests is thus being forced upon the western peoples at the very time when, because the world is falling into two dangerously opposed halves, they wanted to have unity and discipline in their camp and to continue to draw freely upon the human and material resources of the subjected tropical lands.

The enquirer into race relations finds himself in a somewhat similar position to the student of oceanography, in that he can hardly find any boundaries to his subject, it



carries him to every part of the world and can be studied at all levels from its changing surface downwards to the bed-rock of ethnology and psychology. It also stretches back through all historical time. In these few pages I can do no more than make a few comments upon the problem of race relations that faces this country in the context of our Christian faith. The problem presents itself in two parts. On the one hand, there are the Asian peoples with their ancient civilizations and wide areas of religious and political unity who are now re-emerging from subjection, changed indeed, but still proudly retaining their old identity and more than ever resolved to build upon it in the future. On the other hand are the races most newly apprenticed to civilization and especially those of the centre and south of Africa. It is these I propose to have chiefly in mind in their present relationship with our own country.

### *The Evolution of Colonial Policy*

For these latter peoples something quite new in history is happening. The negro and kindred negroid peoples may number some 150 millions within Africa with some millions more who were carried abroad, chiefly into the new world of the West. When the nations of western Europe first made effective contact with them in the fifteenth and three succeeding centuries they found them with so little political organization or material equipment that in the hands of stronger peoples they seemed to be almost as helpless and passive as animals and as such they were for the most part treated. Their main physical protection lay in the barriers to penetration that in most places their continent offered: the surf, the forests, the swamps, and the cataracts, with the discomforts and diseases which so strongly reinforced the poisoned arrow and the spear. As these were gradually overcome the Africans' only hope of relief from eviction or enslavement lay in the restraints which the powerful intruders chose to put upon themselves. There are few more fascinating themes to be traced in history than the growth of these

restraints, derived from Christianity, philosophy or enlightened self-interest, or a mixture of the three, which from the late eighteenth century onward—though there were earlier pioneers—began to influence Europeans, and especially those of our own country in their dealings with subject coloured peoples. Progress both in theory and in practise was slow but to-day the whole world, as represented at the United Nations, professes a complete reversal of the age-long relationship of the strong with the weak, and declares that the strong must not only cease to pursue their own interests but must bend their strength and even make sacrifices in the service of the weak. It is, indeed, demanded that they should do all that is possible, and as quickly as possible, to develop the weak in such a way as to bring their own imperial power and privileges to an end. Viewed historically this is certainly a new and revolutionary demand to make especially of those national governments which have built their strength largely upon colonial power. Yet the policy has been accepted, explicitly or tacitly, by most of the European colonial powers, and our own government, which in terms of population and distribution of power and influence has the largest stake in the colonies, has not only accepted the policy for all its dependencies but has declared that it represents the goal towards which it was already working irrespective of any international prompting.

### *A Mixture of Motives*

As far, then, as public words go, all historical records seem to have been broken in the standard both of altruism and of international agreement that have been reached upon this issue. But even on the level of the formulation of general policy the situation is not so simple as that. While, undoubtedly, the sense of justice and compassion finds expression at Lake Success and also the fellow-feeling of the newly emancipated for those still under subjection, it is no less clear from the records of debates and voting that

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very different motives are also at work and that the Satan of national jealousy is also at work trying to cast out the Satan of imperialism. And it may be that the second is the less Satanic of the two, as it is certainly less injurious than the new unacknowledged forms of domination that are being extended by some of those nations which are most vigorous in their attacks upon the old imperialism.

It is, however, when we turn from policy to its execution that we see the full complexity of the problem. For the same weakness of the African peoples that made their domination so easy is still there to make their liberation difficult. Liberation is, indeed, a misleading word when applied to Africa where, far more even than in Asia, a vast work of construction, economic and, in the widest sense, educational, is needed before European powers, which found thousands of little independent tribes, can leave nation states capable of fulfilling the functions of modern government even on the simplest scale. But though for the success of this process the utmost mutual understanding and co-operation are demanded between the two parties, the moment and the method for the transfer of power are decided by a debate, which too often has the form of a struggle, between a colonial government uneasily representative of the mixture of motives that go to make up its policy, and a people, many of whose leaders are inexperienced and, in the grip of these strong emotions, simply demand the maximum of power in the minimum of time. Meanwhile international opinion, more and less impartial and informed, plays freely upon the issue. In the background, as we have seen, the great division of the world prompts all nations, with the stern advocacy of self-preservation, not to loosen their grip upon a single strategic or economic asset which they hold. And for the Western powers there is the fear that while they keep this grip upon the shell of imperialism its contents may suddenly or insensibly become impregnated with the rival doctrine and loyalty and so the world's two great problems may become fused into one.

*The White Minorities*

The issues as between imperial countries and colonial peoples are even deeper and more intractable when white communities live amongst black majorities and endeavour to retain their supremacy in every aspect of life by crystallizing their initial superiority through law and custom. This artificially preserved stratification can be seen at its most rigid in southern Africa; it appears again in the southern states of America and attempts have been made to reproduce it in areas of white settlement in east and central Africa. Wherever this situation exists, the personal humiliations of the social colour-bar and the theories of inherent racial inferiority of the coloured peoples which are developed to justify their permanent subordination, spread their embittering influence over those wider areas where the relationships are not complicated by white settlement.

In Africa above all there is an absolute opposition between the policy being applied by the British government and that being followed or advocated by the leaders of the white resident communities. The extremes of the contrast are in West Africa, where Britain is now acting upon her equalitarian principles by inviting the peoples of the Gold Coast and Nigeria to draw up their own constitutions and develop towards nationhood, and in the Union where there is a simultaneous acceleration of the opposite policy of disenfranchizing the African majority and the coloured and Indian groups on grounds solely of race. As, with the development of communications, distances in Africa shrink and as with literacy more Africans become aware of what is happening in their continent, the clash of principles may deepen into a struggle based upon race which might ultimately lead to physical conflict.

*Race and Revelation*

There, in a brief simplification, is the general setting of our problem of race relations in Africa. Is it possible to

see where we stand as Christians when we confront this situation?

The non-Christian who looks to Christianity for some guidance through the difficulties of the world generally assumes that our religion is a system of ethics and that we ought at least to volunteer for his judgement some formula and even perhaps, some specific remedy for his problems. We know that our religion, the revelation of God in Christ and His continuing presence in the Church, does not provide us with ready-made solutions for the changing political problems of the centuries. But since most of these can be broken down into the question of the relations of man with man, may not our proper conduct in these personal dealings be extended as it were outwards to throw at least some light upon the larger issues? Since the problem of race relations is, above all, human and personal, it would be strange if Christians could find no guidance as to their conduct in this sphere.

When the Christian layman asks himself where his duty lies he will recognize at least three ways in which the teaching of his faith applies to our problem. First, Christ's whole teaching of love, humility, and service is essentially opposed to attitudes of superiority with all the hardening of spirit they make for the self-elected superiors and the injury and pain they inflict upon the so-called inferiors, men and women whom He created and for whom, equally with us, He died. This is so overwhelmingly clear that it can need neither elaboration nor emphasis here. Could we, whose Incarnate God knelt down to wash the feet of some Jewish fishermen whom He had created claim that there are men unfit for us to serve? It would seem unnecessary to say this if we did not know that there are Christians who believe, even claiming it as a Divine decree, that a rigid and absolute separation should be maintained between the white and coloured races.

Secondly, if more were needed than the general spirit of our Christian duty as shown to us by the words and examples

of our Lord, we have more explicit direction. He entered our world at a time when there were bitter national divisions and hatreds and above all the intense pride and exclusiveness of his own people. But though Christ's brief mission was addressed directly to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, there is one unmistakable lesson in each of the few recorded contacts He had with other peoples, Roman, Syro-Phoenician, and, above all, the despised Samaritans. The lesson was confirmed in the extension of the Church to "the other sheep not of this fold" through the command that the Gospel should be preached to every creature. As slave-owners always realized, the bringing of their chattels into the brotherhood of the Faith made the maintenance of slavery more difficult and this should apply, where common humanity is not recognized as a sufficient claim to justice, to any of the disguised forms of slavery which survive into our day.

The third part of Christ's teaching is to be found in its immediate application by the Apostles and the Early Church to national and class divisions. We know the deep and agonizing struggle that was needed in the heart of the Church before the "middle wall of partition" could be broken down. But the fellowship was to be even wider than that transcending national divisions, since not only was there to be "neither Jew nor Greek", but "neither bond nor free", "neither male nor female" before the oneness in Christ Jesus.

### *The Obedience of Brotherhood*

It may be assumed that all Christians would or should accept this as the teaching which should guide them in their individual lives and which they would expect to find reflected in the general conduct of the Church. In this country it should not be difficult for us to carry out our duty. Few of us, indeed, are ever asked to show our obedience in this sphere and our duty would seem to be to seek out opportunities of welcoming with friendship and hospitality those



who visit our country from Africa and elsewhere, for they often come in doubt and suspicion and do not always meet with more than official entertainment. And sometimes those who are Christians are not sought out by their fellow-Christians and go back with the disillusioning belief that England is not only a place where both the climate and the manners are cold, but also one where the Christian communities are inactive and unloving. These light duties of brotherhood, if we look for them, can be a joy and refreshment; they cost little besides an exercise of sympathy and imagination and may bring a hundredfold return in the adventure of entering into the hearts and minds of peoples of another race whom we discover, for all the differences that history, geography or even biology seemed to have set up, to be close to us in the things of the spirit and of the intellect.

### *The Problem in Practice*

It is when we turn to look at public policy that we encounter one of the Christian's great difficulties. Yet it must surely be part of the Christians to see that the government for which, as voting citizens, they bear their fraction of responsibility, does not permit that men under its rule should continue to live in conditions, only too common in the colonies, which promote disease, immorality, and bitterness. It is widely agreed to-day—and here the life and teaching of Archbishop Temple did much to impress a lesson which has been driven home by the accusing alternative of Communism—that the Christian churches, founded by One who chose to live as a working man and to carry out His ministry of conversion and healing chiefly amongst the poor, have been too indifferent to their suffering and degradation. If the Church should have charged itself more seriously with this care in Britain, where the evils of poverty could be seen and felt and to some extent given expression, how much more so as regards those coloured peoples for whom Britain is responsible, who live unseen and far away and

who, until to-day, had no voice with which to express their grievances and even now often speak confusedly ?

### *The Duty of Foresight*

It would be easy to pause in argument, as it is too often in practice, with this general conclusion about a very general obligation. It is when the Christian tries to decide exactly how he should fulfil his duty with regard to colonial policy at a given place and time that the difficulties begin. The absolute nature of the Christian principles which govern his personal life, in the interpretation of which he has the guidance of the Spirit through his conscience, can be extended only with much prayer and knowledge to political questions unless he is to run the danger of doctrinaire and uninformed judgements which exasperate more than they help those who are struggling with these complex problems. Christians were bidden to be as harmless as doves but there is no injunction that they should be as ignorant. When, for example, a Christian is confronted with an African peasant, illiterate, hungry, diseased, and witch-ridden, and demands that he should be liberated, this moral decision is only the essential preliminary to a long and perplexing effort which will tax all the skill of the administrator, the economist, the doctor, the agriculturist, and the schoolmaster.

There are, for example, great plans in the air to-day, national and international, for the economic development of Africa through large introductions of capital. However necessary and well-intentioned they may be, if these are carried out too quickly there will be disintegration of the fragile tribal societies and large accumulations of men and machines governed by mechanistic plans. Yet, if these efforts are delayed too long, the mounting impatience and suspicion of African leaders will deny them the willing co-operation demanded for their success. In framing these plans decisions, political, scientific, managerial, will have to be taken, in which moral absolutes will be of little help. Our Christian citizen, therefore, while exercising his right

and duty to demand what colonial policy should have as its broad general aim and even with what spirit it should be informed, must either, before he tries to dictate the means, study seriously the given situation or at least decide which politicians or experts are worthy of his confidence.

There is another difficulty which especially affects racial and colonial problems. In all domestic issues the Christian citizen, in striving for reform, is demanding measures and perhaps sacrifices which will affect himself and his family, directly or indirectly, as members of the national community. But in endeavouring to impose his standards of racial justice upon white communities in Africa he is using the political power of the state to enforce sacrifices of the gravest kind which he will never have to share himself, and that in a situation of which he has no personal experience. This section of colonial policy seems, therefore, to present perplexities. Yet there is no escape from it: it is likely to confront us very soon in Kenya, in central Africa, and, in its special form, in the South African High Commission territories.

### *“Straightening the Way”*

Whatever dilemmas and uncertainties the colonial and racial questions present to the Christian—and many of these are only a special aspect of his general position as a citizen—there is one overwhelming certainty upon which he can rest. The extension of the Christian faith into the heathen world is the clear and absolute obligation laid upon Christians by Christ Himself. In this country those who do not themselves devote their lives directly to this service have the duty of supporting it by every other means in their power. Yet even here there is a difficulty of which the supporter of missions should be aware. In the British colonies to-day the missionary churches seem to Africans to be in their staff, and nationality, and in the social and educational functions they have added to evangelization, to be so much part of the imperialist state which dominates their whole lives that the

first shafts of their resentment against this domination tend to strike against the Church and Christianity itself, along with the whole association of controlling and assimilative forces against which they are aimed. The history and status of Africans have been such that their great, if often undefined, longing is that they may cease to be the instruments of other peoples and of their purposes, however great, and become an end in themselves. There is only one context in which this can be fully and safely realized and it is surely the duty of the Church at home and abroad to keep the Faith inviolate from all secular interests, however much in harmony they may seem to be with it. It is only in our common service to God that we can find perfect racial equality and perfect freedom, because there we enter upon a purpose that is utterly detached from our pressing national interests, strategic, economic and cultural, legitimate though they may be upon their own planes. And it is only in God's presence that our little superiorities and inferiorities shrink into nothing beside our infinite common inferiority before Him.

The conversion of individual souls to Christ is the first and abiding purpose that has been given to us. When we measure in all their complexity and potential bitterness the racial problems in Africa and elsewhere, we shall see our effort to solve them by our own skill and knowledge in its right proportion beside the great duty of straightening the way for Christ Himself to enter the hearts of men of all the conflicting races in Africa and reconcile their new world unto God.

MARGERY PERHAM.

## CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE IN UGANDA

I AM writing from a training college for African women teachers where I am staying in a small thatched guest house among eucalyptus trees, looking down over a valley that is still filled with virgin forest. I have been watching a big grader at work that has come up from the main-road camp where re-alignment is going on, to level a playing ground for the small girls of the practising school. The driver has said that he himself wants no pay for this over-time job. The great machine rumbles to and fro industriously, a picture of crude power gentling itself to the service of a group of village girls, making room for them to play. It is pleasant to see it so, for we Europeans have come steam-rolling into Africa, rather literally throwing our weight about, straightening and tidying, but rather often forgetting the gentleness of a gardener who only wants to help things grow. Are we really helping to bring new life to birth?

I have just come from a conference called by the women's committee of the Synod of the Anglican Church in Uganda, to consider what can be done for the adolescent girls of this country. The members of the conference were for the most part African women and missionaries, the guests mostly English from the Education, Medical and Welfare departments of Government. The motive that called them together was a common concern for the girls of this country who either get no schooling or after a few years of school have nothing to go on to, and for those too who go on to vocational training and fall by the way—either during their training or when they are planted out alone in dispensaries or village schools. In Uganda only about 20 per cent of the children get to school, about one-third of them are girls, and of those girls who leave school only about 2 in 7 go beyond the primary stage. They go to school younger now than they first did twenty or more years ago, and they marry later, so there is often a gap of some years passed aimlessly



at home, and the concern of the older mothers for their daughters has lately become acute.

There were two generations of African women at the Conference, the elders have been for the last twenty or thirty years respected leaders of the Church, pillars of Christian marriage. They understand rules and wish to see them kept; they are not anxious for changes in the English marriage laws that were grafted on to the Church in Uganda in its early days; they stand foursquare for monogamy and are fearless speakers in the councils of the Church. They mostly have long families and their daughters are at school, in training, or at work in the world. The younger generation are out on the more perilous seas of freedom, but their certainties when they find them are authentic—"for the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all".

A church conference, some older women, some younger, some married, some with vocational training—is there anything new to be found here, anything that has life in itself?

It seemed to the English members that the most impressive speech was one given jointly by two Baganda sisters, one about twenty years older than the other. The older woman is the wife of an African rural dean and has for a long time been a leader in church affairs; she spoke in Luganda and the younger interpreted for her, having been to England for the filming of "Men of Two Worlds" and being married to a man who lately took his degree at Cambridge. The older woman spoke about discoveries she had made in her own home in her treatment of growing-up children since she had a new incoming of the Holy Spirit. The younger translated for her, "We have discovered in our home that mutual forgiveness brings an increase of love, and when there is more love then you understand your children better. I have discovered for instance that when they bring you their confidences you must keep them secret." She went on to describe other discoveries she had made and one felt that yes, this was not just a little knowledge of modern

child-psychology grafted perilously on to a primitive stock, but it was a new way of life springing spontaneously out of the old, as if a secret fertilization had taken place. It is when this happens that one begins to learn that there is indeed a truth, and a way and a life that belong to no particular race but that verily can be called Christian because they are the flower of direct Christian experience.

I remember a visit to a gardener in South Africa whose chief enthusiasm was to raise new strains of *Amaryllis* lilies. He had already achieved some wonderful new heads and I asked him whether they were catalogued yet? "No, not for another ten years, one can't be sure yet that they will breed true." Just as a research worker must use reserve in describing new material so must we, before we can say that new frontiers have been won, and yet to the layman the evidence sometimes seems slender on which an expert can dare to be confident.

What of the married women of Uganda? Is there anything yet that can be called Christian marriage? These new homes, where the wife takes her place beside her husband, delighting together in their small children with clean gleeful faces, are they real or are they copies? How deep do their roots go? At first they look so like an English marriage that one is suspicious. Eric Gill, writing in his *Autobiography*, describes the setting-up of his English home, "We entered the enchanted garden of Christian marriage in the year 1904 when I was 22 years old. I suppose few young men can have been more fortunate. I had enough work to do to bring in a modest living and evidence of an unfailing supply. I had £15 in hand, a bed, a table, some chairs and a few knives and forks, and the top-hat I was married in—I also had a wife and we had a home..." That is almost exactly the equipment with which those who are married in church here in Uganda are likely to set up house—probably not the top-hat, but there will certainly have been a veil and a wedding-cake—and the house will be small and square, of mud and wattle or of brick with an iron roof,

there may be the beginnings of a flower garden in front and of a banana garden on three sides. The wedding service will have been an exact translation of the English service and the photographer will have been in attendance afterwards. To see one's own habits put on by other people is often embarrassing, it is often to experience being "taken off", and certainly it makes one think. The weddings that crowd the Cathedral here on Saturday afternoons can make one feel passionately the need for a more fully Christian, a less rigidly English service. Joseph McCulloch in the *Door of the Cave* criticizes the Church's inability "to say a real word of power to re-establish in the reasoned imagination the centrality of the marriage relationship in human life . . . . The chief clue in the Anglican marriage service is the comparison of human marriage to the relationship 'betwixt Christ and his Church' . . . . Unless the Church can show clearly why a real relationship here and now transcends death and time and all physical modes of existence whatsoever, it has nothing worth saying to those who are bounded by a sensual awareness of life and prefer a multiplicity of consecutive horizontal marriage-relationships to one of deepening vertical reality." It is time to add that the issue is further confused when by the simple signing of the church register man and wife find themselves bound by the intricacies of English law, which sometimes cuts right across the traditional African concept of the marriage contract, but yet does not clearly signpost a new way. Truly there is a great need to clarify what the Church is saying about marriage in Africa ; but it is we who have set up the pattern who are most disconcerted by it ; probably we must now wait for its re-formation to come spontaneously from the African church out of its own experience.

But is a new way, a new experience of "deepening vertical reality" really there ? It seems so ; it seems as if something new and beautiful is coming to birth before our eyes. What is the special quality of those homes that are founded in Christ ? Others may look like them but soon

die back. There is again the lovely quality of gentleness combined with gaiety, and there is the remarkable wholeness of the children. In other homes the children are governed by a code of extreme meekness before their elders but outside there is no control; kneel down and say "Yes, madam", in a tiny mouselike voice when a grown-up speaks to you, then up and away and do what you like outside. But in these new young homes there is a new way with children, a way of treating them as persons, that is apparent at once in their shining morning faces. This should mean much in the future, but these children are still little, most of them still at home; one young mother has a nursery school in her garden, some of them are just trotting off to day-school, and the future is unborn in them. Then there is an equality of relationship between husband and wife that is new. Here, near the town, they come together to concerts and football matches and open discussions, or the husband drives his wife to a meeting in his small car and then goes home to mind the children until she gets back, or comes as her guest to a women's council. These are small things but not insignificant when you are looking for the beginnings of a "deepening vertical reality". Out in the country where life is less sophisticated the same thing is happening. A wife who has had no schooling at all but is dignified and happy sits down with her husband to discuss the possibility of their daughter doing a medical course, or in a tiny thatched house a husband and wife bear their testimony that "we are together now", and perhaps the new wholeness results in the birth of a child where there was none before. It is in the poorest homes that it is most plain that life and light come in together. In the older relationship the woman was not without her rights, and perhaps because they were small they were jealously guarded. A Muganda father once came to the English head of a school in distress about his daughter's fees and wanting to borrow money which the headmistress had to refuse. Next morning he was back again to say that all was well. "My wife has

agreed to help me with some of her money—it's a great thing to be friends with your wife." Which meant that in that home, as in most others, the wife had been allowed her own plot of land to grow and sell cotton, and the price of the cotton was her own jealously guarded hoard not to be lightly shared. That their rights may be precarious is shown by the request of some women of northern Uganda to the newly formed Uganda Council of Women to consider their case. "Among us," they said, "a widow if childless can be deprived of all share of her husband's goods and is sent away: if she has only girls her husband's family will take them; if she has a boy she can stay and be taken over by the husband's brother." Nor is it only in the more primitive parts that such things can happen. English clothes and knives and forks do not safeguard a woman's position nor her right to her children.

Indeed, as I have said, the homes are still rare where the relation between husband and wife is authentically different. Students from the theological college set out not long ago to visit the homes of the nearby village: they called on seven, and found that in none of them was there a semblance of Christian marriage. Outwardly this country seems so progressive—look at the shops, the bicycles, the fountain-pens, English frocks, Makerere College and the Jinja dam—yet when one talks of new life the picture in one's mind is of new shoots coming up perilously out of thick dark mud. It is not that the best is all dark. A young African chaplain lately conducted a service of blessing in a new European house and he began by saying, "This that we are doing to-day is no new thing in Africa; in the past before Christianity came here, no new house was ever entered without asking for the blessing of the Lubale, the family spirit—there has always been religion. And," he went on to say, "I should like to point out too the part that the woman has always played. In the old days it was always the chief wife who must cut the first sod and cook the first meal. Indeed last year I heard of a chief who built a fine new house, but six



months after it was finished it was still standing empty. I asked why and heard it was because he had quarrelled with his foremost wife and she refused to enter the house, so until they were reconciled the house could not be used !” He was reminding us of an order and seemliness that used to be there and that can still be potent in a modern setting. But as the old order of English life was broken by the Industrial Revolution so the primitive order of African living has been broken up. Two days ago we were discussing planting grass on the playground where the grader has been working; since then heavy rain has fallen and has bogged the ground: there can be no planting now until the water has drained away. African society has been broken up and materialism has come seeping in and there is a very sticky mess. Sometimes you seem to walk on dry ground then you stumble and go through. Round Kampala the swamps that drained slowly into Lake Victoria have been cleared by tree-planting. Perhaps that is what is happening now among us, the Holy Spirit brooding over the face of the waters is calling into being new forms of life that will bring forth fruit each after its own kind to re-order the land. But, as Eric Gill says further, “Having a home is not only having a roof over your head and taxes on your chest, it is also having a dwelling in suitable association with your neighbours.” Trees planted in isolation could not clear a swamp. In what kind of association are these new homes growing up? Is there a society surrounding and nurturing them? The African, it has been said, is still hungry for a tribal security; but more and more, as the report on the recent riots in Uganda pointed out, chiefs are becoming civil servants moved from place to place so that their people owe them no special loyalty and the administrative officers of the British Government are seldom long in one district, so that the settled structure of neighbourliness is broken at the top. Christianity is a religion of relationships, first to God and then to your neighbour. Are these new homes

the nucleus of a new association, are they finding neighbourliness in the Christian Church?

At the Diocesan Theological College there is a small settlement of homes where ordinands may bring their wives and two small children. The warden of the College has said, "the model village where the ordinands and their families live during the training should in many ways become the true centre of the college instead of the classrooms where the academic subjects are taught. I believe that the ideal for a theological college in Africa should be the building of a creative community wherein the future clergy and their wives should not only study the Christian faith but live the Christian life in its total application to a daily round of work and study and worship and leisure, carried through in a close fellowship and common devotion to Christ the centre. This, then, should be our experimental station, the nursery for new seedlings—but already, and this is what I want to say, the miracle is at work. See the people coming out into the sunshine after church, watch the friendly meetings, a teacher leading up his young wife to greet an older couple, a veterinary officer married to a nurse, while their two small sons are having a conversation of their own with the doctor's children, who are waiting for their father to unlock the car—news, congratulations, business with the chief, a new class-room to be built, a wedding to be arranged—a living pattern of association. One sees and believes, that in the midst of the "garden of Christian marriage" stands the home that is built by Christ for his bride the Church.

MARY STUART.

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